GENC SHKODRA
SABRI GANIU

THE WELL-BEING OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE AND SOME FACTORS AND WAYS FOR ITS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

«Concern for the constant improvement of living conditions and raising the cultural level of the whole people has been and remains at the centre of attention of the entire activity of the Party... Our well-being, the happy optimistic future, are guaranteed by the entire dynamic development of our socialist society. They are founded on the free work of our working people, liberated from every sort of oppression and exploitation.»[1]

On November 29, 1984 socialist Albania celebrates the great jubilee of the 40th anniversary of its Liberation from the nazi-fascist occupiers and the triumph of the people's revolution. Four decades are a short period in the history and life of a country and people. However, as to the major events that occurred, the stages that elapsed and the many difficult problems which were solved in our country in all fields of political, economic, social and military life, these four decades are beyond comparison with any other period in all the centuries of its history. Besides this, to acomplish what socialist Albania has done during these 40 years in the field of the

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1 Enver Hoxha, Report to the 7th Congress of the PLA, pp. 60-61, Eng. ed.

development of the productive forces, has required very much longer periods in other countries, even big ones, many of which have done so only at the cost of the sweat and blood of other peoples as well as their own. If we take account, also, of the innumerable great difficulties, the situations created by enemies inside and outside the country with which we have had to cope during these 40 years, we can say with full conviction that during these four decades the economic and social progress in our country has been achieved on rates very much higher than in any other country. Meanwhile, from the stand-point of the social system which has been established in our country, Albania remains the only example in the world of a country that is forging ahead resolutely with building the new socialist society, blazing new trails and providing a living example of the revolution and genuine scientific socialism.

When they look back over the past 40 years, when Albania set out on its course of the construction of socialist society, without exploiters and exploited, the Albanian people see their Homeland raised to heights such as the preceeding generations could not have imagined. The balance of all-round magnificent victories scored in all the fields of life is our people's greatest reward for their titanic struggle and efforts on the brilliant road to socialism. It constitutes an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the people to press on boldly and resolutely in their ceaseless advance towards the construction of socialism and communism, relying on their own strength.

Our people dedicate the achievements in

the socialist construction of the country to the existence and the wise leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania which, enlightened by, resolutely defending, and creatively applying the immortal doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, has continually opened up new ways and clear perspectives to the economic and social development of the country. In the forefront of the people and together with them, the Party, with our beloved leader, Comrade Enver Hoxha at the head, proved able to mobilize all the objective and subjective, political, material, and social factors at each stage, to use them to ensure the highest possible rates of progress of the productive forces, for the continuous improvement of socialist relations of production and to safeguard the victories achieved over external and internal enemies and over revisionist degeneration. That is why our people call the epoch of the socialist construction of the country the epoch of the Party. With this they fully express their readiness and unwavering determination to apply its economic line and policy for the complete construction of socialist society, the correctness of which has been confirmed throughout these four decades of struggle and efforts, unequivocally and always in steel unity with the Party.

In the balance of magnificent achievements in the epoch of the Party during the past 40 years, the victorious and profound transformations in the field of the well-being of our people are especially outstanding.

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The development of our country in the course of the construction of socialist society proves that the socialist socio-economic order is the only order which has as its fundamental aim the continuous raising of the general well-being of the people, that the ceaseless improvement and transformation in the material, cultural and spiritual life of the working masses become a reality only within the framework of this order. The ceaseless rise in the material and cultural level of the working masses and our entire people is inherent in our socio-economic order. It is based on the socialist relations of production which are characterized by relations of mutual aid in the field of production between really free people, liberated from the oppression and exploitation of ruling classes once and for all.

Albania, which four decades ago was the most backward country of Europe, with an extremely low level of development of the productive forces, where poverty and the struggle against starvation, ignorance, illiteracy, etc., were the predominant features of the way of life of the working people, today has the most advanced socio-economic order and a high level of social and economic development.

In 1982, as against 1938, the social product of our country has increased 22.2 fold and the national income 14.2 fold. A series of profound quantitative and qualitative transformations have been accomplished in the structure of the economy and its basic branches. These have led to the

transformation of Albania from a backward agricultural country into an industrial-agrarian one, which is now making rapid strides towards its transformation into an industrial-agricultural country, with multi-branched modern industry and advanced complex agriculture. Total industrial production in 1983 was 155 times and total agricultural production 5.5 times greater than in 1938. The other branches such as transport, building, etc. have developed at similar high rates. The material-technical base already created enables the national wealth and the social product to increase in ever greater proportions and at high rates, relying completely on the country's internal resources, without any foreign aid and credits.

The development of material production at very rapid rates has brought the people's standard of living to a level that has assured them a happy life and, at the same time, has made them optimistic about the security of their future. In 1983, per capita consumption over the whole population was 3 times higher than in 1938. If we take into account that in 1938 the feudal-bourgeois class accounted for a good part of this consumption, the real increase in the per capita consumption of the working people today is several times higher than that which emerges from the statistical data.

The rise in the material level of the people has been closely associated with the continuous rise in their cultural level, too. The past 40 years have seen continuous development and intensification of the ideological and cultural revolution in our country. This has resulted in the elimination of the age-old ignorance and illitera-

cy, the unprecedented uplift in the educational and cultural level, the enrichment of the spiritual life of the working masses, and the formation and tempering of the new socialist man which is one of the greatest victories achieved by the Party during the whole period of socialist construction.

With the directives for the 7th Five-year Plan for the development of the economy and culture, the 8th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania opened up new perspectives for the further raising of the well-being of the working masses, just as for all other fields in the advance of our country on the road of the complete construction of socialist society. The development of the branches of material production and of the social and cultural sectors in this five-year plan will be carried out in conformity also with the objectives envisaged to guarantee and enhance the material and cultural level of the people. In 1985, as against 1980, the real per capita income of the population is envisaged to increase by 8-10 per cent. While envisaging the increase of the real per capita income of the population, at its 8th Congress the Party defined the ways to achieve this and dwelt on all the other aspects of the policy it pursues in the field of well-being at the present stage of the economic and social development of the country.

The objectives envisaged in the 7th Five-year Plan (1981-1985) to fulfil all the varied and growing material and cultural needs of the whole people ever better are an expression of the real possibilities which the dynamic process of extended socialist reproduction creates. The course that is pursued to ensure their accomplishment

is a synthesis and deepening of the great wealth of revolutionary experience that the Party and our people have accumulated in the course of their resolute struggle and efforts to forge ahead with the complete construction of socialist society in our country and to block the way to alien views and practices of any type which would lead to the gradual bourgeois-revisionist degeneration of the socialist order, as occurred in the Soviet Union and the other revisionist countries.

The rapid advance of the economy constitutes the material basis to guarantee and further enhance the well-being of the people

Marxism-Leninism teaches us that the fundamental material condition for the improvement of the people's well-being in socialism is the increase of the social product at rates higher than the population growth. This basic factor is an objective necessity, on the one hand, in order to maintain the material and cultural level achieved, because the social needs are increasing as a result of the population growth in our country, and on the other hand, to fulfil the ever increasing new needs of the people in the field of well-being, which is an objective requirement that derives from the operation of the fundamental economic law of socialist society.

These teachings of the Marxist-Leninist theory of scientific socialism and the objective requirements, that the construction of socialist society presents, have always been the basis of

all the activity of the Party and our socialist state for the economic and cultural development of the country. This is the basis from which the Party has examined, dealt with and successfully solved the problems of deciding the rate of extended socialist reproduction, considering this as the decisive material factor without which the people's well-being cannot be guaranteed or raised. The question of rates has been solved in a dialectical way, in interdependence with all the objective and subjective, material and social, internal and external factors, as well as with the concrete possibilities for the maximum activation and utilization of all these factors at each given stage, in accord with the general line and the economic policy of the Party.

The clear, wise, Marxist-Leninist policy, which the Party of Labour of Albania elaborated and applied in all the phases of the socialist construction of the country for the rapid development of the productive forces, made it possible for Albania to overcome the profound backwardness which it inherited from the feudo-bourgeois regime, in a relatively very short period, and set our country on the road to the ceaseless progress of the economy and culture.

The high rates of increase of the social product in our country, which are several times higher than those of the increase in the population, are a concentrated expression of this progress. In comparison with 1950, in 1982 the social product had increased 12.5 fold, while the population of the country had increased only 2.3 fold.

Not only the high rates of increase in the social product, but also the major improvements made in its structure are fundamental to the

rapid-rate progress of our country. Today our economy has a multi-branched modern industry which has been set up on the basis of the natural assets of the country, as well as a developed and advanced agriculture. The building capacity of the country meets all the needs for the construction of various projects, however large and complicated, while the all-sided transport system ensures the uninterrupted circulation of goods and the movement of passengers.

The setting up and ceaseless strengthening of the material-technical base of socialism, which has been achieved relying on our own forces, has increased the independence of our economy and made it a stable economy, full of vitality, which ensures all the material, financial and foreign currency resources for rapid development of the productive forces. This becomes very clear if we compare the rates of growth of industrial production in our country and several neighbouring countries, over the past ten years, when, as is known, our country has had to overcome the great difficulties caused by the betrayal of the Chinese revisionists, who unilaterally stoped all credits and broke off economic relations with our country.

Industrial production in per cent

	1982 against 1979	Average annual rates of growth
Albania	119.3	6.0
Bulgaria	114.8	4.7
Greece	95.8	—
Italy	100.8	0.3
Yugoslavia	108.3	2.7
Poland	86.4	—

On the basis of the directives of the 8th Congress of the Party, by 1985 social product will have increased 34-36 per cent. These directives are becoming a reality. In 1982, as against 1980, the social product increased 9.6 per cent, or 2.3 times more rapidly than the population.

The higher rates of increase of the social product have resulted in the growth of social production per head of population from year to year. Thus, in 1970, against 1950, the social product per head of population increased 3.8 fold. In 1980 the social product per head of population was 36 per cent greater than in 1970, and in 1985 it will be about 22 per cent greater than in 1980.

In order to ensure a rapid increase of the social product per capita of population, as the necessary material basis which guarantees the extended reproduction and the increase in well-being simultaneously, at all times the Party has utilized the advantages which our socialist order and the natural riches and conditions of the country provide. In these matters, it has striven to raise the effectiveness of the utilization and operation of these factors to the maximum so as to increase the social product at the highest possible rates. Hence, the need to ensure a thorough understanding of the economic, political and social aspects of the fulfilment of the production plan by the state and economic organs and the working collectives, because the fulfilment of the planned targets and their overfulfilment, wherever the possibilities exist, apart from other things, lead to the strengthening and increase of the material basis for raising the people's well-being and the successful achievement of the objectives

set by the 8th Congress of the Party in this field.

Besides the full activization of labour resources, the steady rise in the productivity of social labour has been an ever more operative factor in increasing the social product. In 1980, as against 1970, the productivity of labour in industry increased by 31 per cent and in construction by 27 per cent. Freed from any kind of exploitation of man by man, the working masses have continuously raised the socialist emulation to ever higher levels, making it a powerful factor for increasing the productivity of labour. Conscious that they are working for themselves and the progress of our whole socialist society, the working class, the cooperativist peasantry and the people's intelligentsia, under the leadership of the Party, have consistently improved the socialist organization of their work and have developed and intensified the technical-scientific revolution to increase the productivity of labour.

But the possibilities and reserves for increasing the productivity of labour are inexhaustible in our socialist economy. The good practice of many economic enterprises and agricultural economies proves that the objectives in this field are achieved through strengthening the technical-administrative measures that ensure the regular fulfilment of the tasks of production, through increasing the level of mechanization, especially in certain branches of the economy such as in some mining and construction enterprises in some processes in agriculture, in the auxiliary processes of production, loading and unloading, etc. Likewise, the further improvement of the socialist organization of work such as the improvement of work quotas and the utilisation of work-

ing time, by further strengthening proletarian discipline at work, raising the level of qualification of the working people in certain branches and sectors, especially in those newly created, etc., exerts an influence in this direction.

In striving to ensure high rates of increase of the social product, the Party of Labour of Albania has consistently aimed at and has attained certain fundamental objectives in the economical, social and defence fields.

First, through the ceaseless increase of the social product, the increase in per capita consumption of material goods on which the raising of the material and cultural level of the working masses is dependent, and continuity in fulfilling the ever growing material needs of the entire people have been ensured.

In this sense, the rapid increase of that part of the social product that is used as the fund of consumption, hence, the increase of production in those branches of material production which turn out consumer goods, assumes importance for raising the level of well-being.

In the conditions of our country, the Party has solved the problem of the development of the production of consumer goods in harmony with all the tasks to which the construction and defence of socialism have given rise, such as the accomplishment of the socialist industrialization of the country, the intensification of agricultural production, the construction of the material-technical base of socialism, the strengthening of the defence of the country, etc.

With the possibilities which the dynamic development of the economy has created and giving priority at each stage to the accomplishment of the fundamental tasks of socialist construction, the Party has been careful to apply appropriate measures for a rapid increase in the production of consumer goods. Over the past 20 years (1962-1982), the average annual increase in the production of these goods has been 7 per cent or 2.7 times higher than the increase in the population. This has been sufficient to cope with the increasing needs of a growing population and, at the same time, to ensure increased consumer goods per capita from year to year.

In the 7th Five-year Plan the production of consumer goods continues to increase — about 3 times more rapidly than the average of growth of the population. Thus, the objectives for the rise in well-being are guaranteed for the future, supported by a real material base which is growing steadily stronger.

The increased production of consumer goods is intended not only to fulfil the growing needs for basic necessities, but also to meet the increasing needs for other products, which result from the rise in the purchasing power and the material and cultural level of the people, and the deep-going socialist transformations in the way of life both in town and in countryside.

During the process of the economic and social development of the country the light and food-processing industries have been expanded and strengthened step by step in order to cope with the problems and tasks that have emerged. This process of development has been accompanied with profound structural changes and improvements in order to ensure an ever more extensive range of products with enhanced quality.

On the eve of liberation our country had only a few small factories producing olive oil, macaroni, calico, soap, cigarettes, etc., using extremly primitive equipment and technology and handicraft industry with a very limited varied range of products that did not meet even the most elementary needs of the country. Today the consumer goods industry is represented by a series of branches and sectors of light industry and food processing, such as the textile knitwear, and footwear industries, industries producing metal products and electrical equipment for household use, rubber and plastic products, furniture, radio- and TV-sets, etc. A powerful foodstuffs industry has been set up in our country with its sectors producing sugar and sugar products, edible oils, preserved fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, beer, wine and spirits, meat and milk products and many other sectors, the fundamental funds of which are expanded every year. Besides supplying the local market, many of these products are experted.

Parallel with this, our socialist agriculture, too, has been developed and strengthened. Profound changes and improvements have been made in its branches to fulfil the growing needs of the population for agricultural products and to strengthen the raw materials base for the light and food industries. The correct agrarian policy pursued consistently by the Party of Labour of Albania for the socialist construction of the countryside, the strengthening of the material and technical base of agriculture for its continuous intensification, and the structural improvements in agriculture, have made this basic branch of the economy a powerful factor for the fulfilment of the material needs of the people. Our multi-branched agriculture now meets all the needs of the economy and the people for bread grain, as well as the bulk of the people's needs for other prime necessities, while at the same time ensuring an ever greater volume of exports of vegetables, fresh and preserved fruit, tobacco, and other products.

Thus, the Party has applied the principle of self-reliance in fulfilling the needs of the people for mass consumer goods, as in all other fields. This is why the well-being in our country has been built on sound foundations on the basis of the internal material and financial factors, so that the ever increasing purchasing power is always real and is not undermined by the inflation, etc., which is characteristic of the bourgeois and revisionist capitalist order. Today our light industry and agriculture ensure about 90 per cent of the needs of the population for foodstuffs and other mass consumer goods. The remainder are secured from imports of essential goods and these imports are completely covered by our exports.

The investments made in the sphere of the production of consumer goods provide ever greater possibilities to fulfil the material needs of the people in our country. Likewise, the efforts made by the Party to ensure that the existing productive capacities are utilized to the maximum and the struggle it wages against certain alien tendencies to one-sidedness in fulfilling the tasks of the plan, with overestimation of the total volume and underestimationn of the specific items, also expand these possibilities. Any failure

to fulfil the plan in one article or assortment, however unimportant, is treated as a deficit which has a direct influence detrimental to the people's well-being.

As Comrade Enver Hoxha teaches us, inflation is incompatible with the nature of our socialist socio-economic order. This is because the steadily increasing purchasing power is accompanied with the increase in the supply of goods and the continuous improvement of its structure. However, this does not mean that our socialist economy is completely immunised against the phenomenon of inflation, if we do not fight and take measures to fulfil the production targets for consumer goods, not only in quantity, but also in quality, range, etc., because shortage of them would lead to the emergence of contradictions between the ever increasing purchasing power and the insufficient supply of goods to cover it.

As the present steadily deepening crisis is proving completely the contradictions which emerge between the purchasing power and fund of goods in the capitalist-revisionist world, are resolved by means of inflating the currency and raising prices, while destroying the purchasing power and attacking the standard of living of the people. Not only the weak capitalist and revisionist countries but also the powerful ones have been caught up in this phenomenon for years. The regressive processes developing in these fields unmask and refute the claims about the «superiority» of the «consumer society» which are advertised so zealously by the bourgeoisie and its apologists. It is nothing but a society to suck the blood of the working masses

and exploit them to the bone, with all its ways and means, a society of ceaseless impoverishment for the masses and superprofits for the capitalist class.

In our socialist country of the dictatorship of the proletariat, where production and consumption are organized and managed on the basis of a plan, any minor contradiction which might emerge between the purchasing power and the supply of goods, is always resolved through the mobilization of the working collectives and the respective state and economic organs, in order to fulfil the plan in quantity, quality and assortment, and when the need arises, to overfulfil the targets envisaged. In this field the greatest attention is paid to the «minor items», the «very small articles», because the tendencies to underestimate production of them in the quantities required hinder the fulfilment of the people's needs in all the varied range of mass consumer goods.

The rise in the material and cultural level of the people continually confronts industry and agriculture with the tasks of remodelling the types and range of products so that they respond to the new requirements as to quality, function and other aspects. This problem has been solved on the basis of the continuous technical-technological improvement and modernization of the light and food industries. The investments made for small, partial or total, technical-technological reconstructions in individual enterprises or to establish new production lines with their own forces have assisted in this direction.

Second, the Party has regarded the conti-

nuous and rapid increase of the social product as the main essential condition to ensure rapid growth of the national income which, in the conditions of the social and economic development relying entirely on our own forces, constitutes the sole source of material and financial means to accomplish the tasks of socialist construction in the fields of the development of the productive forces, the defence of the country, and the continuous increase in the well-being of the whole population.

The Party of Labour of Albania has worked in several directions apart from increasing production, to augment the national income, which is the concentrated expression of the effectiveness of the economy. Applying a correct Marxist-Leninist economic policy, parallel with the increase of the social product, the Party has taken effective measures to build the most rational and fruitful structure of the economy and branches of material production, taking in account the conditions of our country with a limited territory and a small population. On this basis, the national income has increased step by step at rapid pace, augmenting the material and financial resources of the country for a socialist accumulation in ever greater proportions and expanding the fund of consumption at rates always higher than the rate of natural growth of the population.

While utilizing the great advantages provided by the socialist order, which is thrifty by nature, the Party has constantly mobilized the working masses to apply a strict regime of savings everywhere in the field of material production, where the national income is created and increased. In this context, an ever more important role has been played by the development of the technical-scientific revolution, by means of which, parallel with the rapid growth of the socialist product, it has become possible to consistently strengthen the technical-technological and economic-organizational factors so as to utilize the national assets and national wealth created by the hand of our new man of socialism in a rational and thrifty manner. In the continuous strengthening of the regime of savings, our working masses, guided by the Party and the teachings of Comrade Enver Hoxha, have borne in mind that the prosperity of a country depends not only on how much it creates, but also on how it uses its assets.

The correct solution of the problems that have emerged for the greatest possible activization and harmonization of the factors leading to growth of the national income, during the last 20 years, have resulted in 3.2 fold growth in its volume compared with 1960. This increase is 3.7 times greater than the increase in the population. Hence, the national income per head of population has doubled during the last two decades. This is obvious also from the objectives set by the 7th Five-year Plan which envisages a growth of 35-37 per cent in the national income, or somewhat more than the growth of the social product. This means that during this five-year period the factors of intensification, which ensure an increase in the efficiency of the economy more rapidly than in the last five-year plan, will operate more powerfully.

In our socialist society the level of the people's well-being is being raised in proper proportions with the national income. This means that the growth of the national income to ever greater proportions, at the same time ensures the growth in volume of the fund of consumption and the raising of the material and cultural well-being of the people to a higher level.

Since the continuous growth of the national income is the indispensable condition for the increase of well-being in socialism, the great tasks set by the 8th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania for increasing the effectiveness of the social product in the broadest sense, assume special importance. This means that the organization and management of the economy by the state and economic organs, as well as the mobilization of the working collectives in town and countryside must be continuously enhanced to solve the complex problems which ensure the efficiency of the economy, through which the maximum national income is ensured. These problems also have a bearing on the rapid increase, in the first place, of the social product with the increase of the nett product in every enterprise and agricultural cooperative, district and branch and of the national income in the context of the whole national economy at accelerated rates with increasing the productivity of social labour in order to ensure the increase with priority of the product for society, which constitutes the only source for increased accumulation, and the application of measures for the development of the social and cultural sectors and the reduction of prices. The solution of problems has

to do, likewise, with the strengthening of the regime of savings everywhere in the material expenditure of production and the utilization of the funds of accumulation, with high effectiveness, with the increase of exports and the maximum reduction of imports, with providing full employment for the new resources of labour which are created by the growth of the population, as well as with the ceaseless strengthening of the defence of the country.

All these tasks laid down by the 8th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania are the concrete ways which will be followed in the future to raise the efficiency of the economy ceaselessly, to increase the national income per head of population and, on this basis, to enhance the people's well-being. Bearing in mind the progress towards achieving the targets in the field of the national income during the 7th five-year Plan, greater activization of the factors which ensure the application of a strict regime of savings in the field of material expenditure assumes special importance.

In the process of extended reproduction, when industry is developing more rapidly than the other branches of production, the volume of materials expended in production assumes ever increasing proportions. Likewise, the continuously increasing mechanization in the other branches of production also leads to increased proportions of the expenditure on materials (as against living labour) per unit of the social product. In 1982 these expenditures represented about 60 per cent of the social product of the country, and 69.4 per cent in industry alone. A

reduction of only 1 per cent in this expenditure brings the economy an annual gain equal to the cost of building more than six thousand dwelling apartments.

The growth of the national income is the basic premise for raising the well-being in our socialist state. But raising the well-being depends also on the way the national income is distributed. On the basis of Marx's well-known schemes for extended reproduction, which are fully applied in our socialist society, the Party of Labour of Albania and our socialist state use the national income to expand production, to increase the reserves, to strengthen the defence of the country, etc., as well as to fulfil the growing material and cultural needs of the members of our socialist society. In this direction the proportions established in the division of the national income into the product for oneself and the product for society, between the fund of consumption and the fund of accumulation, are especially important. This has been decided taking into account both the people's well-being and the rates of the socio-economic development of the country. These proportions, which constitute one of the fundamental aspects of the economic policy of the Party, always express and reflect the requirements of the objective economic laws of socialism, on the basis of which our socialist society guides the entire process of uninterrupted social and economic development.

The continuous care of the Party for the distribution and utilization of the national income has always been decisive in ensuring that this is done on the basis of scientific criteria

and in correct proportions, in conformity with the tasks which each stage of the socialist construction of the country has presented. In these matters it has always given priority to the general and future interests, to the more rapid growth of the fund of accumulation, the bulk of which is channelled into the sphere of production in order to ensure the priority development of the branches of material production. At the same time, the Party has always pursued a correct policy for a reasonable and continuous rise in the real income per capita of the population.

The ratio between the fund of accumulation and fund of consumption in the distribution of the national income has altered depending on the political-socio-economic tasks the Party has set in each five-year plan. Irrespective of the alterations in this ratio, however, a steady increase in the funds of consumption at rates more rapid than the rate of increase in the population, has been ensured from year to year and from one five-year plan to the next. Even in the 6th Five-year Plan, despite the great damage the cutting off of credits by the Chinese revisionists brought to our economy, through the measures which the Party took to overcome the difficulties which were created for our economy, the fund of consumption was increased further.

It is precisely this correct policy applied by the Party in the distribution and use of the national income which has led our economy step by step to such a stage of development that now, relying entirely on its own forces, it is able, on the one hand, to ensure the necessary material,

financial and foreign currency resources for expanded reproduction at rapid rates and, on the other hand, to guarantee an expanded consumption which leads to a continuous general rise in the standard of living of the working people.

This is evident also in the objectives of the 7th Five-year Plan in which 67 per cent of the national income created will be used for the livelihood and cultural needs of the people, with the fund of consumption increasing 22 per cent in 1985, as against 1980.

Third, with the rapid increase in the social product at rates several times higher than the rate of growth of the population, the full employment of the labour resources has been ensured, with this becoming the main way of raising the level of the people's well-being. In the last ten years 343 thousand new forces have been employed in socially useful work in the sphere of material production and other social and cultural sectors, while during the first three years of the 7th Five-year Plan (1981-1985) 139 thousand new workers were employed. The average annual increase of the active forces employed in the last decade (1970-1980) was 3.9 per cent, against the 2.3 per cent average annual growth of population, whereas during 1981-1983 the average increase of the working people was 3.8 per cent, against the 2.1 per cent average rate of population growth.

The number employed in the state sector of the economy and culture has increased at still higher rates — at an annual average of 4.7 per cent in the last decade, and 3.9 per cent during the first three years of the 7th Five-year Plan. All the resources of labour in the towns have

been activated in order to meet the needs arising from the development of the state sector of the economy and in addition some have been drawn from the countryside. The full employment of the work force, in the conditions in which the population of the country is increasing at the highest rate in Europe, constitutes one of the greatest achievements of the economic policy of the Party of Labour of Albania in the socialist construction of the country. The employment of the entire active population has ensured the rapid development of the economy and the general raising of the people's well-being. In this way, during the past ten years (1973-1983), the real income per capita of the whole population has increased 21 per cent, with the peasantry having the highest rate of increase.

Consistently pursuing the course of the full employment of the work force, 210 thousand new jobs will become available from the social and economic development of the country according to the objectives set in the 7th Five-year Plan. Thus, full employment is steadily assured for all the new resources of labour in town and countryside. The bulk of the increase in the people's purchasing power and the people's fund of consumption will result from this factor.

The significance of the achievement of full employment of all the new resources of labour, as they become available in our country, becomes still more clear when we see that in the capitalist-revisionist world, shaken by worsening economic crises, the army of the unemployed is increasing to ever greater proportions. There the standard of living of the working people continues to fall because of the all-round attacks on

it made by the bourgeoisie and the revisionists in their efforts to pull the economies of their countries out of the crisis by saddling the working people with its consequences.

With its demographic policy the Party of Labour of Albania will continue to take measures to maintain consistently high rates of population growth. This means that in our country the dynamic growth of the population will provide relatively large contigents of new active workers. Besides this it will ensure that the average age of the population remains low in the future, too.

Therefore, the social product and the national income will continue to increase rapidly, making better use of the great possibilities that our socialist order provides in these fields, and the internal material and financial resources and reserves that exist in every cell of our economy. For this reason a relatively high norm of accumulation in the utilization of the national income will be maintained, while at the same time, ensuring the maximum effectiveness of every lek accumulated.

Thus, the aim is to achieve the maximum reduction in the cost of opening up of each new job, a cost which tends to rise continuously as the result of the introduction of advanced equipment and technology. This will make it possible to open up a greater number of new jobs with the same amount of funds. Likewise, the aim is to get the maximum production and financial accumulation on the basis of the socio-economic profitability and the most rational variants in the construction of projects and their distribution according to spheres and branches. This will enable still more material and financial means to be freed to

ensure even higher rates of increase of the fund of consumption and the real income per capita of the population in the future.

The social, cultural and service sectors have great importance in raising well-being and the cultural development of the working masses

Along with the uninterrupted development and rapid growth of material production, the Party of Labour of Albania has always paid special attention to the continuous development and strengthening of the service, social and cultural sectors, which play a very important role in fulfilling the material and cultural needs of the working people better and better.

The rapid development of industry, agriculture and other branches of our socialist economy has enhanced the role of the trade sector in meeting the ever increasing material and cultural needs of the working masses. Being in direct daily contact with the consumers and as the link between them and production, our socialist trade network has always striven to apply as best as possible the policy of the Party for the general and continuous raising of the people's well-being, to ensure a regular uninterrupted supply of mass consumer goods. Comrade Enver Hoxha points out, «The Party has never regarded the socialist trade network simply as a technical apparatus for the distribution of goods, but has always considered it,

first of all, as a branch of great economic and social importance»[1].

In implementing these orientations and directives of the Party and the teachings of Comrade Enver Hoxha, our socialist trade network has been developed, and strengthened and its active role has been consistently enhanced.

On the basis of and in conformity with the increase of the people's well-being and buying power, the turnover of retail goods has increased from year to year. Thus, in 1982, as against 1960, the turnover of retail goods in the state sector (estimated at the prices of the respective year) increased about 3 fold, or nearly twice as rapidly as the population growth over the same period. In fact, if we also take into account the reductions in the retail prices of mass consumer goods, which were applied during this period in our country, from which the population gained more than 500 million leks, this increase is even greater.

According to the directives of the 8th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania for the 7th Five-year Plan, the turnover of retail goods in the state trade network will increase 22-24 per cent in 1985 as against 1980, or over twice as rapidly as the population.

Carrying out its socio-economic mission, our socialist trade continues to play a major active role in two directions: in both production and consumption. Through more complete and thorough knowledge of the traditions of our people and their changing needs, taste, and demands for consumer goods, the trade sector has exerted its influence, on the one hand, to increase production, to expand the range and improve the quality of goods and, on the other hand, to expand consumption and introduce more and more new consumption goods.

1 Enver Hoxha, Report to the 5th Congress of the PLA, «Naim Frashëri» Publishing House, Tirana 1966, p. 74, Alb. ed.

The trade sector exercises its primary and most important influence on production through its scientific study of the requirements of consumers. Without such a study, there can be no talk of establishing the planned links between production and consumption, between town and countryside and between the various zones of the country. The scientific study of the people's needs and demands enables the trade sector to plan correct orders with production, and to ensure that the proper harmony is maintained between the monetary income of the population (purchasing power) and total supply and range of goods. «...The organs of trade and all the people working in them,» Comrade Enver Hoxha teaches us, «should study the requirements of consumers constantly and have detailed knowledge of them, as well as of the changes they undergo in time according to groups of working people and regions.»[1]

In this direction great advances have been made and, in general, a correct ratio between the supply of goods and the requirements of consumers has been established. The enthusiasm of the working class and the cooperativist peasantry has given a new impetus to the production of

1 Enver Hoxha, Report to the 6th Congress of the PLA, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1971, p. 95, Alb. ed.

mass consumer goods in quantity, quality, and structure. From year to year they have rapidly increased the quantity of goods, extended their range and improved their quality, thus ever better fulfilling the growing requirements of the people. In this context, our socialist trade system has made its active contribution to increasing the production of consumer goods and supplying the people with more new kinds and assortments of fine, durable and attractive goods at low price, produced by industry, agriculture and other branches of our socialist economy.

On the basis of the increase in the production of mass consumer goods and the purchasing power of the population, sales to the people and the use of mass consumer goods per capita have increased from year to year. Thus, in 1982 as against 1960, sales of some staple food products have increased as follows: edible fats — 3.9 times; milk — 3.9 times; cheese — 3.8 times; meat, fish and sausage — 3.1 times; eggs — 4.8 times; potatoes — 3.9 times; vegetables — 4.8 times; fruit, citrus and grapes — 6.1 times; sugar — 3 times; rice — 2.4 times, etc.

Along with the increase of sales and use per capita of food-stuffs, important improvements have been made in the diet of the population, especially with the increased use of food products with higher protein and fat content.

There has also been a great increase in the sales to the people and use per capita of such articles as textiles, clothing, footwear, knitwear, soap and detergents, furniture, kitchen utensils, washing-machines, TV-sets, refrigerators, etc. Our industry is providing the people with more and more fine, durable high quality

goods. Thus, we could mention the products of the textile combines in Tirana and Berat, the knitwear combine in Korça, the products of the glass factories in Tirana, Kavaja and Korça, the enamel-ware of the «Partizani» plant in Tirana, plastic products, furniture and kitchen utensils, carpets and many many other products.

Besides its active role in increasing the production and improving the supply of consumer goods for the population, our socialist trade in its main function of supplying of the population with goods and services, plays an important role in safeguarding, strengthening and developing on the correct Marxist-Leninist course the traditions, tastes and demands of the working masses for consumer goods. It is a fact that in our socialist market, along with goods traditional among our people, the turnover of goods of a more varied and richer structure for which there is greater demand from the consumers is steadily increasing.

In its capacity as the link between production and consumption through a correct and timely distribution of goods, our socialist trade plays an important role in reducing differences in the sales and the use per capita of population of food and non-food products, between different zones and, especially, between town and countryside. All the necessary food-stuffs and industrial products, both of daily and long-term use, are available everywhere in our country. Sales of goods in the countryside have been higher than in town, thus influencing the further narrowing of distinctions in the use per capita of the main consumer goods. Thus, in the last five years, sales of edible fats in the countryside have been about 3 times higher than in town; of

sugar — 2 times; vegetables — 3.5 times; textiles and knitwear — 2 times; soap — 4 times higher, etc.

Our trade system also plays an active role in applying the policy of the Party for reducing the distinctions between town and countryside through its special function as a wholesale purchase organization which absorbs surplus agricultural products.

In order to respond better to the increase of the volume and circulation of goods, and to improve the supply and services towards the people, the retail trade network has been extended from year to year, and its structure and distribution has been improved. Today our country has an extensive trade network, covering all towns and villages, which is beyond any comparison with what existed before Liberation, when in order to buy a sack of maize, a little salt, or kerosine, our villager had to travel for days on end. In 1982 the number of trade units was 2.3 times greater than in 1960.

With the large investments made in it today our trade system has an efficient base of warehouses able to accept, store, and distribute ever larger quantities of goods. It has at its disposal a variety of machinery and equipment and a powerful base of refrigerator plants which enable goods to be stored, preserved and traded the whole year round. An extensive network of shops, restaurants and dining-rooms, where the people can buy complete or partly prepared meals has been established. This is increasingly easing the burden of domestic work on the housewife.

The measures that have been and are being taken, on the initiative and with the support of

the cooperativist peasantry, for the further reduction of the cooperativists' private plot and the formation of joint herds of their household livestock, together with the creation of new conditions for the more rapid raising of the standard of living of the peasantry, are extending and further strengthening the activity and role of our socialist trade system in the countryside. This is especially marked in the greater availability of goods, especially foods-stuffs and in the higher cultural level with which they are traded in the countryside.

Along with the tasks it has taken up for the development of other sectors of the economy the Party of Labour of Albania has also shown special and constant concern for the improvement of the living conditions of the population, to ensure continuous supplies of drinking water and the strengthening and further development of other communal services for the people, which play an important role in the fulfilment of the material and cultural needs of the working masses.

The number of new apartments and houses built in town and countryside has increased from year to year. In the last 22 years (1961-1982) about 265 thousand apartments and houses have been built. Today, more than 80 per cent of the urban and rural population lives in houses built during the years of the people's state power.

«Improvement of the housing conditions of the population has always been one of the important questions of the Party's policy in the field of well-being,»[1] points out Comrade Enver Hoxha.

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1 Enver Hoxha, Report to the 8th Congress of the PLA, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1981, p. 54, Eng. ed.

During the 7th Five-year Plan (1981-1985), more than 80 thousand new apartments and houses, which will accomodate about 400 thousand people, will be built. The figures for the first three years of this period show that the housing targets are being overfulfilled.

In our country the state spends considerable funds on the repair and maintenance of houses. House rents in Albania are among the lowest in the world. A month's rent is equal to two days' pay of an ordinary worker.

The supply of drinking water, which is an important factor connected with the life and health of the population, has been steadily improved. Along with measures taken to ensure and improve the water supply in towns, the state has provided large amounts of money and materials to improve water supplies in the countryside, too. Today, more than 56 per cent of the villages of the country are supplied with drinking water through systems built with state funds and assistance.

On the basis of the targets of the 7th Five-year Plan, work is going on rapidly to build a series of new water supply systems which will ensure increased supplies for the population.

The supplying of electric power to all the villages with the state meeting all the expenditure incurred for the maintenance, reconstruction or extension of the electrical distribution network in the countryside is another very important measure for the improvement of living conditions, the cultural development and the development of the productive forces all over the country, as well as for further raising the cultural level of the people.

The extension and improvement of the trade network selling clothing and footwear, furniture and household equipment, the increased provision and the continuous improvement of the quality of communal services for the population, are exerting an ever greater influence for better fulfilment of the material and cultural needs of the working people. In 1982, as against 1975, repair and communal services for the people had increased 38.5 per cent or 2.4 times faster than the population. The variety of communal services in town and countryside has been extended, and for each year of the 6th Five-year Plan an average of 110 different communal activities were added.

During the 7th Five-year Plan the communal services are assuming further vigorous development. In 1985, as against 1980, repair and communal services for the people, which are carried out by the communal enterprises, will increase 45-47 per cent, whereas those to be done by the agricultural cooperatives will increase 80-84 per cent. During the first three years of the current five-year plan these targets have been achieved and in some instances exceeded.

Extension of the activity for the maintenance of roads and drains, for services at the beaches, parks and gardens, for sealing roads and squares, for communal hygiene and cleanliness, has also exerted an influence for the ever better fulfilment of the needs of the working masses and for the creation of a more cultured environment for them. During the past 12 years, alone, the area of urban parks and gardens has increased 67 per cent. These activities are being

expanded further during the current five-year plan.

«Raising the level of education and culture of the masses constitutes a condition and a sound basis for the economic and social progress of the whole country, for strengthening the defence potential of the Homeland, and for the constant improvement of the life of the people,»[1] said Comrade Enver Hoxha at the 8th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania. On the basis of and while implementing these orientations, a real revolution in the education and cultural level of the working masses has been accomplished in our country.

Before Liberation of the country, about 90 per cent of the population was illiterate. Today more than 67 per cent of the workers have 8-year or secondary schooling, 32 per cent of them have secondary or higher vocational qualification. In the countryside, over 52 per cent of the cooperativists have 8-year or secondary schooling. In 1982 the number of the working people with higher schooling was 12 times greater than in 1960. Today our country has more than 56 thousand working people with higher education and 187 thousand with vocational secondary education. In our country more than 25 thousand people graduate each year from the full-time or part-time vocational schools of secondary or higher level.

The successes achieved in the mass participation in all the links of our education system

1 Enver Hoxha. Report to the 8th Congress of the PLA, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1981, p. 54, Eng. ed.

have made this system able to cope with the present and future requirements in all the fields of socialist construction.

In the years of the 7th Five-year Plan the number of secondary school pupils is increasing considerably. Not only urban children, but also more and more rural children are attending secondary schools. In the year 1985, about 98 per cent of the urban children and 76 per cent of rural children will continue with secondary schooling after completing the compulsory 8-year schooling.

Special attention is being paid to the development of higher education. During the current Five-year plan 45 per cent more students than in the 6th Five-year Plan will be admitted. New profiles are being created and post-University qualification and specialization is being expanded.

Careful work is being done also for the development and extension of the pre-school educational system in our country. It has been extended and developed all over the country, in town and countryside, both in the lowlands and in the hilly and remote mountainous zones, fully equipped with the necessary ever expanding didactic base. In the development and extension of the pre-school education system, the narrowing of distictions not only between town and countryside, but also between different zones and districts, has been taken into account.

The sectors of culture and art are developing rapidly in our country. In our country a large number of artistic and cultural institutions have been set up and are functioning including the Opera and Ballet Theatre, the «New Albania»

Film Studio, publishing houses, professional drama and variety theatre institutions, houses and hearths of culture, public libraries, museums and museum-houses, cinemas, galleries of figurative arts, etc. The publication of political, cultural, encyclopaedic and illustrated books, the radio-television network and other activities are being extended. During the 7th Five-year Plan the transmission of TV programes in colour has commenced. Publications in foreign languages and technical-scientific publications will increase considerably.

The increase of people's knowledge and the development of their culture in our socialist society, is a great potential factor for the fulfilment of all the tasks set by the Party. In this sense, they are also an important factor for raising the general level of well-being of the working people in our country.

Care for people's health, to prolong their lives, is another very important aspect of the policy of the Party for raising the people's well-being. «The happy life, the joy of our man, is meaningless and inachievable without protection of his health,»[1] says Comrade Enver Hoxha. In implementing the directives of the Party and the teachings of Comrade Enver Hoxha, a series of important measures have been carried out in our country. The network of health institutions has been extended to every corner of the country, and the number of medical personnel with

1 Enver Hoxha, Report to the 6th Congress of the PLA, «8 Nëntori» Publishing House, Tirana 1966, p. 96, Alb. ed.

higher, secondary of lower levels of qualification have increased. Thus, in 1982 as against 1960, the number of health institutions had increased 5.4 fold and the number of hospital beds have more than doubled, etc. Today in our country there is one fully qualified doctor or dentist for each 583 inhabitants.

There has been a great extension of the all-sided prophylactic service to protect and strengthen the people's health, not to mention here the fact known world-wide that in Albania medical services are free of charge to everybody, both in town and in countryside.

Special care is displayed, also, for the protection of the health of mother and child, especially in the countryside. The recent extension of paid maternity leave to six months is another important measure among the many measures taken for the protection of the health of mother and child in our country.

All these measures have resulted in the extension of the life expectancy to nearly 70 years as against 38 years before Liberation in our country.

The further improvement of the organization of the health service, as well as the further intensification of prophylactic measures, the strengthening of out-patient service and the extension of the health service in crechès, kindergatens, schools and work centres are leading to the further strengthening of the health of the people in town and countryside, as well as to the further extension of their average life expectancy, in the future.

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The questions which are linked with the guaranteeing and gradual raising of the people's well-being have a marked political and ideological character, therefore profound understanding of them and the struggle to apply them in practice assume special importance in the present conditions, when we are building socialism relying entirely on our own forces, without any foreign aid or credits.

Under the leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania and Comrade Enver Hoxha, in the context of the great jubilee of the 40th anniversary of the Liberation of the Homeland, the working masses of town and country are scoring success after success fulfilling all the targets of the year 1984. By accomplishing the objectives of the 7th Five-year Plan, in the field of people's well-being, as in all the other directions, even more solid foundations are being laid to proceed at a more rapid pace in this field, and greater prospects are opened to our working masses for a more prosperous and happier life.